

Fannie Riche Plantation, New Roads
Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana

HABS No. La. 35

HABS
LA

39-NEWRO.V

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Louisiana

Historic American Buildings Survey
Richard Koch, District Officer
908 Queen & Crescent Building, New Orleans, La.

FANNIE RICHE PLANTATION

Owner

Dr. James C. Roberts, New Roads, La.

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Architect

Unknown

Builder

Unknown - Between 1825 and 1835

Present Condition

Good, but much altered

Number of Stories

Two

Materials of Construction

Cypress. Basement, brick. Cypress shingle roof.

Other Existing Records

Chain of Title, Parish of Pointe Coupee, Court House, New Roads, Louisiana; also in possession of Dr. J. C. Roberts and of M. T. Hewes, Notary Public, New Roads, Louisiana. Photographed in 1927 by Robert Tebbs.

Additional Data

New Roads in Pointe Coupee Parish is one of the few portions of Louisiana that to-day still has marked French characteristics, and, though it is doubtful if any of its buildings go back to the French days, ~~and~~ what remains was built in a tradition that had been inherited, and, as is so interesting in Louisiana architecture, the older forms are clothed in the details of the newer generation which was American. Fannie Riche (HABS No. La. 35) so well represents this peculiar phase - a West Indian house raised higher than usual with a porch on three sides. The roof is hipped with an overhang of cut brackets and on the front are two small dormers with engaged columns similar to the mantels in the house. The attic was not used as the only entrance is through a soutte. The usual two

large middle rooms are across the front and on the rear are smaller rooms, where may have been a porch. A staircase leads to the ground from the front porch, but it is modern and in subsequent renovations the marks of the original stair were removed. This could have been inside the porch as was the early custom. A door for a rear stair does not explain itself, though it may have connected to a detached kitchen, a later arrangement that was common in this neighborhood.

The details of the living room are most interesting and we are curious as to the background of the man who did this work. While some of the moldings are of early classical revival extractions, the form of the mantel is early Louisiana, decorated in what could be called late colonial, particularly in the triple arches and the reeding of the chimney breast. The complicated cornice somehow has a feeling of the West Indies, but no doubt it is derived from a late 18th century colonial model. The star and the moon in the panels of the mantel, somewhat out of scale, add another motive to this polyglot room. The mantels in the minor rooms, simpler in detail, but with a variety of reeds and panels give these rooms a more native character. Their large open fireplaces, with the fire-brick close to the woodwork, have inherited from the early French a feeling for scale and fitness of purpose peculiar to these people.

The detail of the exterior casement doors is excellent and the transoms with segmented fan-lights with a star covering the joints of the muntins and the curious filling in with an ornament of wood suggesting a wrought iron form are a pleasing local addition.

The lower brick columns, now square, were round with caps common to the area; such a pilaster still exists and pieces of round columns were found in the field. Above on the main floor are the usual turned colonettes, though none too refined in their detail. The bottom floor was used as a dining room, for remnants of the panelling of the chimney breast were in place.

Fannie Riche is within 100 yards of a levee that has been often moved and similar houses were no doubt in the neighborhood. On the grounds of the plantation is a negro cabin built from remnants of a similar house. The doorway has the identical fan-lights as Fannie Riche and in the bedroom is a mantel similar to the one in the main house, but somehow the use of fillets and a restraint of ornament and its color, a faded blue bronze green, distinguishes this mantel.

The Survey has not been able to investigate the titles to this property. The legend is that Fannie Riche was the colored unlawful wife of a Pointe Coupee planter who willed the plantation to her as was a common practice. Prior to 1893 the property was owned by Anita Cevalin who was said to have been colored.

Recently Fannie Riche has been modernized - an asbestos roof, the dormers are gone, the house lowered to the ground, the mantels thrown out with the exception of the main room where the larger open fireplace has been closed in and the walls, moldings etc. craftexed. Tho Survey was there none too soon.

CHAIN OF TITLES

Book "C" 231

Entry 3483

"A certain tract of land situated in the Parish of Pointe Coupee, known as the Fannie Riche Plantation, fronting eight (8) arpents on the Mississippi River, by a depth on the upper line of eighty (80) arpents more or less, and a slightly less depth on the lower line according to the titles of same, with buildings and improvements thereon, bounded above by plantation of Bourgeois and Stonaker, known as St. Maurice, and below by lands of Elie Loupe, and in the rear by lands acquired by purchase from Ernest B. Middleton, by act passed before M. T. Hewes, N. P., Nov. 4, 1919, and recorded in the conveyance records of the Parish of Pointe Coupee in Book C, p. 231, entry No. 3483.

This property lies in lateral sections 9 - 10 and 69, Township 4-South, Range 10, East.

Nov. 4, 1919. Dr. James C. Roberts acquired from Ernest B. Nettleton - "A certain tract of land, known as the "Fannie Riche Plantation", fronting eight (8) arpents on the Mississippi River, by a depth on the upper line of 80 arpents and slightly less depth on the lower line, with buildings and improvements thereon: bounded above by plantation of Bourgeois and Stonaker, known as St. Maurice; below by lands of Elie Loupe, and in the rear by lands attached to the plantations fronting on False River, being the same property acquired by Mrs. Rooney from J. P. Gosserand, Dec. 16, 1895.

Recorded Dec. 31, COB 1895, entry No. 17416 - \$15,000.00.

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October 2, 1918 - Ernest B. Nettleton acquired from Pervis C. Major, eight (8) arpents on the Mississippi River; a depth of 80 arpents on the lower line for \$10,000.00.

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February 12, 1915. P. C. Major acquired from Mrs. C. C. Rooney by Sheriff's Sale.

Dec. 26, 1895. Mrs. C. C. Rooney acquired from J. P. Gosserand, COB 1895 - Entry 17416 - \$10,000.00.

January 24, 1893. J. P. Gosserand acquired from Anita Cavelier for \$6,250.00.

N. B.: An abstract was not made due to the closing of the office in 1937, and since then funds have not been available for necessary traveling expenses.



water column No (85)

(330)

Columns under gallery at
Jamaica Ridge.

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Original in 671 12570-15 (11)

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NO NEGATIVE



HABS Copy only (no negative)
Richard Koch, Photographer

1927

MANTEL IN ROOM #6